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### Who is Ramzi Yousef? And Why It Matters

#### *The National Interest*

by Laurie Mylroie  
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NOTE: Laurie Mylroie, formerly of Harvard University and the U.S. Naval War College, is currently with the Foreign Policy Research Institute of Philadelphia. She was co-author of the bestseller, *Saddam Hussein and the Crisis in the Gulf* (Random House 1990), and has just completed a sequel, 'Study of Revenge': *Saddam's Terror Against America*.



.**ACCORDING TO THE** presiding judge in last year's trial, the bombing of New York's World Trade Center on February 26, 1993 was meant to topple the city's tallest tower onto its twin, amid a cloud of cyanide gas. Had the attack gone as planned, tens of thousands of Americans would have died. Instead, as we know, one tower did not fall on the other, and, rather than vaporizing, the cyanide gas burnt up in the heat of the explosion. "Only" six people died.

Few Americans are aware of the true scale of the destructive ambition behind that bomb, this despite the fact that two years later, the key figure responsible for building it--a man who had entered the United States on an **Iraqi passport** under the name of **Ramzi Yousef**--was involved in another stupendous bombing conspiracy. **In January 1995, Yousef and his associates plotted to blow up eleven U.S. commercial aircraft in one spectacular day of terrorist rage.** The bombs were to be made of a liquid explosive designed to pass through airport metal detectors. But while mixing his chemical brew in a Manila apartment, Yousef started a fire. He was forced to flee, leaving behind a computer that contained the information that led to his arrest a month later in Pakistan. Among the items found in his possession was a letter threatening Filipino interests if a comrade held in custody were not released. It claimed the "ability to make and use chemicals and poisonous gas... for use against vital institutions and residential populations and the sources of drinking water." [1] Quickly extradited, he is [now in U.S. custody awaiting trial this spring](#).

Ramzi Yousef's plots were the most ambitious terrorist conspiracies ever attempted against the United States. But who is he? Is he a free-lance bomber? A deranged but highly-skilled veteran of the Muslim jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan? Is he an Arab, or of some other Middle Eastern ethnicity? Is there an organization--perhaps even a state--behind his work?

These questions have an obvious bearing not only on past events but on possible future ones as well. [2] It is important to know who Ramzi Yousef is and who his "friends" are, because if he is not just a bomber-for-hire, or an Islamic militant loosely connected to other Muslim fundamentalists, Yousef's "friends" could still prove very dangerous to the United States. It is of considerable interest, therefore, that a very persuasive case can be made that **Ramzi Yousef is an Iraqi intelligence agent**, and that his bombing conspiracies were meant as Saddam Hussein's revenge for the Gulf War. If so, and if, as U.S. officials strongly suspect, **Baghdad still secretly possesses biological warfare agents, then we may still not have heard the last from Saddam Hussein.**

This essay will focus on three points. First, it will argue that, as things stand now, coordination between the Justice Department and the relevant national security agencies is such that the latter--and thus national security itself gets very short shrift when it comes to dealing with terror incidents perpetrated on U.S. soil. Second, it will look afresh at the evidence from the World Trade Center bombing case and suggest that the most logical explanation of the **evidence points to Iraqi state sponsorship**. Third, it will assay briefly what dangers the Iraqi regime may still pose to the United States should this analysis prove correct.

## A High Wall

THE SUGGESTION THAT Iraq might well have been behind Ramzi Yousef's exploits may initially strike many as implausible. Wouldn't the U.S. government investigation of the World Trade Center bombing have uncovered evidence to that effect, evidence that the press, in turn, would have broadcast far and wide? Wouldn't America's robust anti-terrorist intelligence capacities have focused on such suspicions long ago?

While these are reasonable questions, they reveal a lack of understanding about how the U.S. government works when legal and national security issues of this special sort overlap. A high wall, in fact, stands between the Justice Department, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, on the one hand, and the national security agencies on the other. Once arrests are made, the trials of individual perpetrators take bureaucratic precedence over everything else. The Justice Department inherits primary investigatory jurisdiction, and the business of the Justice Department is above all the prosecution and conviction of individual criminals. Once that process is underway, the Justice Department typically denies information to the national security bureaucracies, taking the position that passing on information might "taint the evidence" and affect prospects for obtaining convictions. [3]

In effect, the Justice Department puts the prosecution of individual perpetrators--with all the rights to a fair trial guaranteed by the U.S. judicial system--above America's national security interest in determining who may be behind terrorist attacks. Questions of state sponsorship that are of pressing interest to national security agencies are typically relegated to a distant second place, or never properly addressed at all, because the national security agencies are denied critical information. In particular, whenever early arrests are made regarding a terrorist incident on American soil, the U.S. government cannot properly address both the national security question of state sponsorship and the criminal question of the guilt or innocence of individual perpetrators at the same time.

This is precisely what happened in the World Trade Center bombing. In the case of Ramzi Yousef, the perfectly reasonable questions posed above about who this man is and who may sponsor him have never been properly investigated. Instead of the appropriately trained people conducting a comprehensive investigation, the World Trade Center bombing was followed by an undercover operation, in which an informant of dubious provenance led a handful of local Muslims in a new bombing conspiracy, aimed at the United Nations and other New York landmarks. For this conspiracy Sheikh Omar Abdul Rahman and nine others were found guilty in early October 1995. Yet none of those in the trial of Sheikh Omar et al., as it is formally called, was accused of actually participating in the World Trade Center bombing.[4] They were

only charged with conspiracy regarding it. The government contended that other followers of Sheikh Omar--four fundamentalists who stood trial in 1994--were actually responsible for putting it into effect.

But what if Ramzi Yousef, who eluded the grasp of U.S. authorities until after his second bombing conspiracy, is neither a follower of Sheikh Omar nor a Muslim fundamentalist? That if **he is an Iraqi agent**? From a legal perspective--as the judge in that trial advised the defense team--whether state sponsorship played a role in the World Trade Center bombing was irrelevant to the guilt or innocence of Sheikh Omar et al. And indeed, the prosecution did not need to address the question of whether the World Trade Center bombing had state sponsorship in order to obtain the convictions sought against Sheikh Omar and the others.

Indeed, that state sponsorship can be irrelevant to a criminal prosecution was explained most clearly by the federal prosecutors in the New York bombing conspiracies, the lead prosecutor in the trial of Sheikh Omar et al., and the lead prosecutor in last year's Trade Center bombing trial, who will also prosecute Ramzi Yousef. **When I put it to them that Iraq was probably behind the Trade Center bombing, they replied, "You may be right, but we don't do state sponsorship. We prosecute individuals." Asked who does "do" state sponsorship, they answered, "Washington." "Who in Washington?" No one seemed to know.**[6]

Yet by responding to state-sponsored terrorism solely by arresting and trying individual perpetrators, the U.S. government, in effect, invites such states to commit acts of terror in such a way as to leave behind a few relatively minor figures to be arrested, tried, and convicted. Done adroitly, this makes it unlikely that the larger, more important, and more difficult question of state sponsorship will ever be addressed.

The problem is illustrated vividly in the case of Ramzi Yousef since his arrest in February 1995. The Justice Department has passed on very little information to other bureaucracies. The FBI's typical response to any question about Yousef is: "We can't tell you much because of the trial." [7] As a result, the State Department, which is responsible for determining whether a terrorist act had state sponsorship, lacks the most basic information-- even, for example, a point as simple as what passport Yousef was traveling on when he was arrested in Islamabad.

The details of the World Trade Center case are chilling. From the outset, the Justice Department refused to share key information with the national security agencies. The government had two sets of relevant information--foreign intelligence, gathered by the CIA from watching terrorist states such as Iran and Iraq, and evidence gathered by the FBI largely within the United States for use in the trial. **The FBI flatly told the national security bureaucracies that there was "no evidence" of state sponsorship in the World Trade Center bombing. When the national security agencies asked to see the evidence themselves, the FBI replied, "No, this is a criminal matter. We're handling it."** Thus, all that the national security agencies had available to decide the question of state sponsorship was foreign intelligence they themselves had collected.

But many cases of state-sponsored terrorism cannot be cracked by means of intelligence alone. The crucial element linking the bombing of Pan Am flight 103 to Libya, for example, was not intelligence but a piece of physical evidence--a microchip, part of the bomb's timing device, that could be tied to other bombs built by Libyan agents.

After the World Trade Center bombing, the FBI was the only bureaucracy with both the intelligence and the evidence. Even if the FBI did make a serious effort to examine the evidence for state sponsorship--and it is not clear that it did--the Bureau alone is not competent to carry out such an investigation. "They're head hunters", one official in Pentagon Counterterrorism remarked--that is, they are oriented to the arrest of

individuals. A State Department expert described the FBI's new Office of Radical Fundamentalism as "a joke", bereft of any genuine Middle East expertise.

But the more fundamental problem is that the Justice Department in Washington seems not to have been interested in pursuing the question of state sponsorship. **In fact, the New York FBI office suspected an Iraqi connection early on, but the Washington brass seemingly wanted to tell America that they had already cracked the case and caught most of the perpetrators.** It is always easier to go after the small fry than to catch the big fish, and law enforcement is ever vulnerable to the temptation to cut off a conspiracy investigation at the most convenient point.

Thus, five weeks after the World Trade Center bombing, four Arabs were under arrest. The mastermind, Ramzi Yousef, had fled. Still, at that point in early April 1993, the FBI proclaimed that it had captured most of those involved. The bombing, it claimed, was the work of a loose group of fundamentalists with no ties to any state. The predictable media frenzy followed and, perhaps as a result, some obvious questions were not asked. How could the government know so early in the investigation that those it had arrested had no ties to any state? If the government knew so much so soon, then why did one of those arrested never stand trial for the bombing, and why were three others indicted much later? In short, the Justice Department determined that the bombing had no state sponsorship even before it decided definitively who had been involved.

Moreover, by April it was impossible to have conducted a sufficiently thorough investigation. Such an investigation required, at a minimum, a meticulous examination of all records associated with the defendants to insure that they had had no contact with foreign intelligence agencies--or at least that none could be found. That process simply could not have been accomplished in five weeks. And it must be kept in mind that, at the time, the mastermind of the bomb was a fugitive about whom almost nothing was known. How could anyone therefore declare confidently that he was not a foreign agent, especially in light of the fact that he had entered the United States on an **Iraqi passport** and had been known among the New York fundamentalists as "**Rashid, the Iraqi**"?

Ironically, this sort of problem would not have arisen had the bombing occurred abroad. In such cases there are usually two separate investigations by two different bureaucracies, one to determine state sponsorship, the other to catch the individuals responsible. After the bombing of Pan Am 103, for example, the CIA led an inter-agency intelligence investigation addressing the question of state sponsorship. There was also a separate criminal investigation, headed by the FBI, aimed at individual perpetrators.

But there was no intelligence investigation of the World Trade Center bombing. The CIA is, after all, prohibited from operating in America. Of course, a crack inter-agency team could have been established to examine the question of state sponsorship. But Clinton administration officials set up no such team.

In September 1995, the State Department forwarded to Congress the report of an independent panel, established to examine whether mistakes in security training had contributed to the March 8 assassination of two U.S. consular officials in Karachi--apparent retaliation for Ramzi Yousef's extradition. The report expressed concern about the FBI's lack of cooperation with the national security agencies. Clearly, discontent with the FBI is growing among those agencies as issues such as international crime--and with them the Bureau's international role--assume a more prominent role in the post-Cold War world. Indeed, one State Department official described the FBI'S unwillingness to share information as "the train wreck coming"--meaning that given the FBI's lack of expertise in international politics, there may well come a time when the Bureau will be sitting on information that, in the hands of others, could have been used to avert a disaster.



One may indeed ask whether the World Trade Center bombing itself is not a harbinger of the train wreck coming. For if Saddam Hussein was behind it, then the Justice Department, in effect, has blinded the national security bureaucracies to a serious danger, namely the possibility that in the extreme Iraq might use biological agents, whether for terrorism in America or in the context of military action in the region, possibly involving U.S. troops.

Of course, that is an important "if." It is to that issue we now turn.

## **Dramatis Personae**

Ramzi Yousef, a.k.a. Abdul Basit Karim -the key man; likely Iraqi agent.

El Sayid Nosair--murderer of Rabbi Meir Kahane, bomb plot initiator.

Emad Salem--FBI informant with ties to Egyptian intelligence.

Mohammed Salameh--Palestinian fundamentalist, Nosair accomplice and early plotter; left a trail of phone calls to Iraq.

Musab Yasin--Iraqi with New Jersey apartment where Yousef first went.

Abdul Rahman Yasin--Musab's brother, led FBI to apartment where bomb was made; employee of Iraqi government; indicted fugitive, presently in Baghdad.

Nidal Ayyad--Palestinian fundamentalist convicted in the World Trade Center bombing.

Mahmud Abu Halima--Egyptian fundamentalist cab driver convicted in the World Trade Center bombing

Eyyad Ismail--Palestinian from Jordan charged with having driven the van.

## **Forty-Six Calls to Iraq**

ALTHOUGH THE national security agencies never received the World Trade Center evidence, at the conclusion of a trial evidence becomes public. Anyone can examine it, and I did so meticulously. The raw data consist mostly of telephone records, passports, and airplane tickets. Such data reveal nothing directly about state sponsorship, but under close analysis certain facts begin to stand out and certain patterns emerge. And it helps to know the Middle East well.

The story begins in November 1990 when an Egyptian fundamentalist, El Sayid Nosair, shot and killed Meir Kahane, an extreme right-wing Israeli-American, in Manhattan. A year later, in November 1991, Nosair's trial became a cause celebre among local fundamentalists, who turned out in force to support their "martyr." Planted among them was an Egyptian, **Emad Salem**, working as an FBI informant, even as he maintained ties to Egyptian intelligence. In December, the jury returned a bizarre verdict, acquitting Nosair of murder and finding him guilty on lesser charges. An outraged judge gave Nosair a maximum sentence on those lesser charges, and sent him to Attica.

The fundamentalists continued to support Nosair, arranging bus trips from their mosques to visit him in prison. Salem, the FBI plant, remained among them. In early June 1992, with Salem acting as an agent provocateur, Nosair convinced his friends to execute a bomb plot. He wanted them to make twelve pipe bombs, to be used for assassinating his judge and a Brooklyn assemblyman, the others to be used against Jewish targets. A cousin was to organize the plot, and Salem was to build the bombs.

A twenty-six year old Palestinian, Mohammad Salameh, was soon recruited into the plot. Salameh comes from a long line of terrorists on his mother's side. His maternal grandfather fought in the 1936 Arab revolt against British rule in Palestine, and even as an old man joined the PLO and managed to get himself jailed by the Israelis. A maternal uncle was arrested in 1968 for terrorism and served eighteen years in an Israeli prison before he was released and deported, making his way to Baghdad where he became number two in the "Western Sector", a PLO terrorist unit under **Iraqi influence**.

Despite this pedigree, **Salameh** himself is naive and manipulable. When one considers that he was arrested in the process of returning to collect the deposit on the van he had rented to carry the Trade Center bomb, it is not so surprising that on June 10, soon after being recruited into Nosair's plot, Salameh made the first of **forty-six calls to Iraq**, the vast majority to his terrorist uncle in Baghdad. We can only speculate about what Salameh told his uncle, but it seems very likely that he spoke about the bold new project Nosair was organizing, perhaps seeking his help and advice. Salameh's telephone bills suggest that the pipe bombing plot was one of the most exciting events in his life: In six weeks he ran up a bill of over four thousand dollars and lost his phone service.

Iraq is one of the few remaining Stalinist states. Iraqis routinely assume their telephones are bugged, and are even cautious about discussing sensitive issues in their own homes. The more significant the person, the greater the likelihood his activities are monitored--at least that is what Baghdadis assume. My own experience in Baghdad makes clear that when Iraqis want to be sure that a conversation is not monitored, it takes place out of doors. It is thus more than likely that Iraqi intelligence learned of Nosair's bombing plot and Salameh's participation in it through Salameh's phone calls to his uncle. In any event, key preparatory steps to the World Trade Center bombing were taken within days of Salameh's first call-including steps taken in Baghdad.

On June 21, an Iraqi living in Baghdad, Abdul Rahman Yasin (subsequently an indicted fugitive in the Trade Center bombing) appeared at the U.S. embassy in Amman asking for a U.S. passport. Born in America, Abdul Rahman received his passport, which he soon used to travel to this country.

Just at this crucial point, unfortunately, the FBI lost track of the Nosair-Salameh conspiracy. It did not fully trust its informant, Emad Salem, and Salem's ties to Egyptian intelligence; the Bureau severed relations with him in early July when he refused to follow its procedures relating to criminal investigations.

Salameh's phone bills and other evidence raise the distinct possibility that, Iraqi intelligence having learned of Nosair's plans from Salameh's calls to his uncle, Baghdad decided to help out, transforming the plot in the process. If so, the speed of the reaction suggests that Iraqi intelligence may have already been planning some operation against America, and that Salameh's calls to his uncle provided it with a fortuitous means of carrying it out. Here probably lies the source of Ramzi Yousef's exploits in America.

## **Enter Ramzi Yousef**

ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1992, Ramzi Yousef arrived at JFK airport. He presented an **Iraqi passport** without a U.S. visa, was briefly detained (and fingerprinted) for illegal entry, and granted asylum pending a hearing. Yousef went to stay at the apartment of Musab Yasin, an **Iraqi** living in Jersey City. So too did Abdul Rahman Yasin, Musab's younger brother, who arrived in America from Iraq soon after Yousef. (Musab had an unlisted telephone number under an Israeli-sounding alias, Josie Hadas.)

Musab lived in the same building as Mohammad Salameh. Many young Arab men used their two apartments, praying and eating together; relations were so close that the apartments were connected by an intercom. Once established within this group, Ramzi Yousef befriended Salameh, and the two left to share

an apartment elsewhere in Jersey City. From then on, the impressionable Salameh was under Yousef's wing.

Although the principal conspirators had been in place since September, it was not until after the U.S. elections on November 3 that Yousef began to prepare the World Trade Center bomb. In mid-November the first of many calls to chemical companies appears on his phone bills. At the same time, Yousef also began calling surgical supply companies for the gloves, masks, and rubber tubing he needed to make the bomb. In the meantime, two other local fundamentalists were recruited into the plot, Nidal Ayyad and Mahmud Abu Halima. Ayyad, a Palestinian, was the same age as Salameh and Salameh's friend. Abu Halima, a thirty-four year old Egyptian cab driver, was a friend of Nosair. Abu Halima was older and generally savvier than the two Palestinians.

In January 1993, Yousef and Salameh moved into another Jersey City apartment where the bomb was actually built. Set well back from the street, the building provided seclusion. On February 21 a twenty-one year old Palestinian named Eyyad Ismail arrived from Dallas. Ismail is charged with having driven the bomb-laden van.[8] On February 23, Salameh went to a Ryder rental agency to rent the van to carry the bomb. On the morning of February 26, the conspirators gathered at a local Shell gas station where they topped up the tank--one last explosive touch--before driving to Manhattan. Shortly after noon, the bomb went off, on--let it be well noted--the second anniversary of the ending of the Gulf War.

That evening Salameh drove Yousef and Ismail to JFK airport; Yousef escaped to Pakistan on falsified travel documents, and Ismail flew home to Jordan. But Salameh looks to have been deliberately left behind by Yousef, not provided with money he needed for a plane ticket. Salameh had a ticket to Amsterdam on Royal Jordanian flight 262, which continues on to Amman, dated for March 5, but it was an infant ticket that had cost him only \$65. While Salameh had been able to use this ticket to get himself a Dutch visa, he could not actually travel on it. Needing more money for an adult fare, he tried to get his van deposit back by telling the rental agency that the van had been stolen. With either desperate or inane persistence, he returned three times before he was finally arrested on March 4.

Salameh had used Musab Yasin's phone number when renting the van, and Abdul Rahman Yasin was picked up the same day in a sweep of sites associated with Salameh. Abdul Rahman was taken to New Jersey FBI headquarters in Newark. He is reported to have been extremely cool, as a trained intelligence agent would be. He was helpful to investigators who themselves faced tremendous pressure to produce answers. He told them, for instance, the location of the apartment that was used to make the bomb, a key bit of information. They thanked him for his cooperation and let him walk out. This, although he had arrived just six months before from **Iraq**, and might well attempt to return there. And indeed, the very next day, Abdul Rahman Yasin boarded Royal Jordanian 262 to Amman, the same plane Salameh had hoped to catch. From Amman he went on to **Baghdad**. An ABC news stringer saw him there last year, outside his father's house, and learned from neighbors that he worked for the Iraqi government.

Meanwhile, as U.S. authorities searched for Abdul Rahman Yasin in March 1993, after his "helpful" session with the FBI and before they knew for certain that he had fled, an FBI agent who had worked with Emad Salem in June 1992 speculated:

*"Do you ever think that Iraqi intelligence might have known of these people who were willing to do something crazy, and that Iraqi intelligence found them out and encouraged them to do this as a retaliation for the bombing of Iraq. . . . So the people who are left holding the bag here in America are Egyptian. . . or Palestinian. . . . But the other people we are looking for, Abdul Rahman, he is gone. . I hate to think what's going to happen if this guy turns out to be. . an Iraqi intelligence operative...and these people were used."* [9]

Mahmud Abu Halima had similar thoughts. As he told a prison companion who later turned state's evidence:

*"The planned act was not as big as what subsequently occurred. . . Yousef showed up on the scene. and escalated the initial plot. . . . Yousef used [them]. . .as pawns and then immediately after the blast left the country."* [10]

That, indeed, is the most straightforward explanation of the World Trade Center bombing: that it was an Iraqi intelligence operation, led by Ramzi Yousef, with the local fundamentalists serving first as aides and then as diversionary dupes.

Since Yousef's arrest and extradition to the United States, the evidence for this explanation has, if anything, grown stronger. First of all, he is clearly no fundamentalist. According to neighbors, he had a Filipina girlfriend and enjoyed Manila's raucous night life.[11]

Yousef's nationality and ethnicity have also become known. He is a Pakistani Baluch.

The Baluch are a distinct ethnic group, speaking their own language, one of several Middle Eastern peoples without their own homeland. They live in eastern Iran and western Pakistan in inhospitable desert terrain over which neither Tehran nor Islamabad exercises much control. Baluchistan is a haven for smuggling, both of drugs and of arms. The Baluch are Sunni and are at sharp odds with Tehran's Shia clerical regime. Through Iraq's many years of conflict with Iran, first in the early 1970s and then during the Iran-Iraq war a decade later, Iraqi intelligence developed close ties with the Baluch on both sides of the Iranian-Pakistani border. Above all, it used them to carry out terrorism against Iran.

Yousef's associates in Pakistan, too, were anti-Shia. This fact, taken together with his Baluch ethnicity, make it nearly impossible that Iran could be behind Yousef. The most recent inquiries, made since Yousef's arrest, have reduced the question to two possibilities: He is a free-lancer connected to a loose network of fundamentalists; or **he worked for Iraq**. [12]

## **Of Passports and Fingerprints**

THE SINGLE MOST important piece of evidence pointing to Iraq is the passport on which Yousef fled America. It was no ordinary passport.

On November 9, 1992, just after the final green light for the bombing had been given, Yousef reported to Jersey City police that he had lost his passport. He claimed to be Abdul Basit Mahmud Abdul Karim, a Pakistani born and reared in Kuwait. Then, between December 3 and December 27, Yousef made a number of calls to Baluchistan. Several of them were conference calls to a few key numbers, a geographical plotting of which suggests that they were related to Yousef's probable escape route--through Pakistani and Iranian Baluchistan--across the Arabian Sea to Oman, after which the "telephone trail" ends. After Yousef's arrest, a National Security Council staffer confirmed to me that Yousef had indeed fled from the United States through Baluchistan.

On December 31, 1992, Yousef went to the Pakistani consulate in New York with photocopies of Abdul Basit's current and previous passports. Consistent with his story to police in Jersey City, he claimed to have lost his passport and asked for a new one. The consulate suspected his non-original documentation enough to deny him a new passport. But it did provide him a six-month, temporary passport and told him to straighten things out when he returned "home." This turned out to be good enough for the purpose at hand.

By now it should be clear that the World Trade Center bomber's real name is probably neither Ramzi



Yousef nor Abdul Basit. After all, would someone intending to blow up New York's tallest tower go to such trouble to get a passport under his own name? Yousef was a man of many passports; he had three on his person when he was arrested in Pakistan. Rather, it seems that Ramzi Yousef risked going to the Pakistani consulate with such flimsy documents because he wanted investigators to conclude that he was in fact Abdul Basit, and so would stop trying to determine his real identity. And that is pretty much what happened.

But why Abdul Basit Karim? Here we come to one of the most intriguing and vital aspects of the case. Because there really was an Abdul Basit Karim, a Pakistani born in Kuwait, who later attended Swansea Institute, a technical school in Wales. After graduating in 1989 with a two-year degree in computer-aided electronic engineering, he returned to a job in Kuwait's planning ministry. As Abdul Basit and his family were permanent residents of Kuwait, Kuwait's Interior Ministry maintained files on them. But the files for Abdul Basit and his parents in Kuwait's Interior Ministry have been tampered with. Key documents from the Kuwaiti files on Abdul Basit and his parents are missing. There should be copies of the front pages of the passports, including a picture, a notation of height, and so forth, but that material is gone. There is also information in the file that should not be there, especially a notation stating that Abdul Basit and his family left Kuwait for Iraq on August 26, 1990, transiting to Iran at Salamchah (a crossing point near Basra) on their way to Pakistani Baluchistan, where, according to the file, they now live.

Who put that notation into Abdul Basit's file and why? Consider the circumstances of the moment. The Kuwaiti government had ceased to exist, and Iraq was an occupation authority; bent on establishing control over a hostile population amid near-universal condemnation, as an American-led coalition threatened war. The situation was chaotic as hundreds of thousands of people were fleeing for their lives. While the citizens of Western countries were pawns in a high stakes game, held hostage by Iraq, little attention was paid to the multitude of Third World nationals bent on escape. It truly boggles the imagination to believe that under such circumstances an Iraqi bureaucrat was sitting calmly in Kuwait's Interior Ministry taking down the flight plans--including the itinerary and final destination--of otherwise non-descript Baluchis fleeing Kuwait. Rather, it looks as if Iraqi intelligence put that information into Abdul Basit's file to make it appear that he left Kuwait rather than died there, and that, like Ramzi Yousef, he too was Baluch.

Moreover, Iraqi intelligence apparently switched fingerprint cards, removing the original with Abdul Basit's fingerprints and replacing it with one bearing those of Yousef. Fingerprints are decisive for investigators because no two people's match. But the very fact that fingerprints are so decisive makes them the perfect candidate for careful manipulation. Thus, after U.S. authorities learned that Yousef had fled as Abdul Basit, they sent his fingerprints (taken by the Immigration and Naturalization Service at JFF airport when he was briefly detained for illegal entry) to Kuwait, asking if they matched those of Abdul Basit. When the Kuwaitis said that they did, everyone assumed the question settled--forgetting that Kuwait's files were not secure during the Iraqi occupation.

Pakistan also maintains files on those of its citizens permanently resident abroad, at the embassy in the country in which they live. On August 9, Baghdad ordered all embassies in Iraq's "nineteenth province" to close. Most did, including the Pakistani embassy. The files on Abdul Basit and his family that should be in the Pakistani embassy in Kuwait are missing. The Pakistani government now has no record of the family.

What does all this suggest? To me it suggests that Abdul Basit and his family were in Kuwait when Iraq invaded in August 1990; that they probably died then; and that Iraqi intelligence then tampered with their files to create an alternative identity for Ramzi Yousef. Clearly, only Iraq could reasonably have: 1) known of, or caused, the death of Abdul Basit and his family; 2) tampered with Kuwait's Interior Ministry files, above all switching the fingerprint cards; and 3) filched the files on Abdul Basit and his family from the Pakistani embassy in Kuwait.

Of course, the best way to verify or falsify this would be to check with people who knew Abdul Basit before

August 1990. To this end, Brad White, a former Senate Judiciary Committee investigator and CBS newsman, contacted an overseas source he knew in the United Kingdom who had looked into the matter. Two people had a good memory of Abdul Basit but, shown photos of Yousef, were unable to make a positive identification. They both felt that while there was some similarity in looks, it was not the same person. "Our feeling is that Ramzi Yousef is probably not Basit", White was told.[13]

Logic and circumstance also suggest the same conclusion. Is it likely to be mere coincidence, after all, that during Iraq's occupation of Kuwait key documents were removed from Abdul Basit's and his parents files, while the same files were filched in their entirety from the Pakistani embassy? Moreover, Abdul Basit had no criminal record in Britain, nor did he or his parents have any security record in Kuwait. The first concrete knowledge we have of Ramzi Yousef/Abdul Basit comes in early 1991, around the end of the Gulf war when he showed up in the Philippines seeking contact with a Muslim group there. Introduced as "the chemist", he proposed to collaborate in bombing conspiracies. Now, how did a young man who had led a seemingly normal life up until August 1990 suddenly become a world class terrorist six months after Iraq invaded his country of residence? Where did he get such sophisticated explosives training in just six months? (The real Abdul Basit's degree, remember, was in electronic engineering, not chemistry, which Swansea Institute does not even teach.)

And where are Abdul Basit's parents? They never returned to Kuwait after its liberation, nor have they appeared anywhere else. Did they too take up a life of crime after decades of abiding by the law?

Ramzi Yousef's arrest has made it easy enough to resolve a key question and perhaps produce important evidence implicating Iraq in the World Trade Center bombing:

Is "Ramzi Yousef" really Abdul Basit or not?

Let those who remember Abdul Basit from before August 1990 meet Yousef in person and tell us. It sounds simple and logical, but strangely, the Justice Department has shown no interest in arranging such a meeting. Moreover, it has decided to try the bomber as Ramzi Yousef even though no one, including Yousef by now, maintains that that is his real name. If the government believes that Yousef is really Abdul Basit, why doesn't it try him as Abdul Basit? Why is the Justice Department uninterested even in definitively determining his identity, even though doing so might help get to the bottom of the matter. I recently asked a Justice Department official, who maintains his confident view that Yousef is indeed Abdul Basit, "Why don't you bring the people who knew Abdul Basit to the prison to meet Yousef, so they can say for sure if they are the same?" "But you", I was told, "are interested in an intelligence question." Earlier I had been told, "It does not matter what we call him. We just try a body."

And so back we come to the high wall. As before, those who have the information about Ramzi Yousef and his bombing conspiracies are not concerned with the question of state sponsorship, or at least consider it secondary to their trials; while those who are concerned with state sponsorship are denied the information that they need to investigate the question properly.

## Threats From Baghdad

MOST MEMBERS OF the U.S. national security bureaucracies think that Saddam Hussein has largely lain low since the Gulf War, constrained by economic sanctions and swift American reactions to his occasional feints to the south. But if in February 1993, Saddam ordered his agents to try to topple New York's tallest tower onto its twin, and if, in January 1995, Iraq sponsored an effort to destroy eleven U.S. airplanes in the Far East, then Saddam has not been quiescent.

This, simply put, is why it is important to find out who Ramzi Yousef is and who may have put him up to his

murderous work. Maybe Iraq had nothing to do with him, despite all the circumstantial evidence suggesting otherwise. But if it did, then the otherwise peculiar, bombastic, and extremely violent statements emanating from Baghdad might make more sense than they at first seem to.

In the fall of 1994, Baghdad's official press, in essence, threatened that Saddam might use his remaining unconventional agents, biological and chemical, for terrorism in America, or in missiles delivered against his enemies in the region if and when he became fed up with sanctions.[14] On September 29, 1994, following an otherwise cryptic statement of Saddam Hussein's, the government newspaper, Babil, warned: "Does the United States realize the meaning of every Iraqi becoming a missile that can cross to countries and cities?"

Other threats followed almost daily;

*When peoples reach the verge of collective death, they will be able to spread death to all. [15]*

*When one realizes that death is one's inexorable fate, there remains nothing to deter one from taking the most risky steps to influence the course of events. [16]*

*We seek to tell the United States and its agents that the Iraqi patience has run out and that the perpetuation of the crime of annihilating the Iraqis will trigger crises whose nature and consequences are known only to God.[17]*

These statements occurred in the context of Saddam's second and abortive lunge at Kuwait, which was thwarted by the swift U.S. deployment to the region. Saddam then turned around and formally recognized Kuwait, removing what then seemed to be the last major obstacle to lifting sanctions, and the Iraqi press soon began to call 1995, "the year of lifting sanctions."

But that was not to be. The UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) started to uncover evidence of a large, undeclared biological program. As Baghdad's disappointment grew, the Iraqi press began to repeat the threats it had made in the fall. The number two man in Iraq's information ministry warned, "Iraq's abandonment of part of its weapons-the long-range missiles and chemical weapons. . . does not mean it has lost everything." [18] Al-Quds al-Arabi, a London paper financed by Baghdad and close to the Iraqi regime, cautioned. "Iraq still has options. But they are all destructive options. Yet if the Americans continue to humiliate them, they will have no option but to bring the temple down on everyone's head." [19]

After Baghdad succeeded in getting a clean bill of health from UNSCOM in mid-June on its chemical and missile programs, it finally acknowledged in July having had an offensive biological program and having produced anthrax and botulinum. But it denied that it had ever tried to weaponize those agents and, in any case, claimed to have destroyed them in the fall of 1990. The claim was neither credible nor verifiable, particularly as Iraq produced no documents detailing their destruction. Indeed, the Iraqi "revelations" may even have been meant as a threat, an attempt to intimidate the United Nations by hinting at what Baghdad was still capable of doing.[20]

In early August 1995, as Iraq pressed UNSCOM for a clean bill of health on its biological program, Hussein Kamil--Saddam's cousin and son-in-law, and the man responsible for overseeing the build-up of Iraq's unconventional weapons program defected. This precipitated a flood of stunning revelations from Baghdad. They included the admission that **Iraq had indeed weaponized botulinum and anthrax**. At the very same time that it had earlier claimed to be destroying those agents, the Iraqi regime now acknowledged that it had been stuffing them into bombs and missiles. Yet Iraq still claimed that whatever biological agents it had produced had been destroyed, even as it still failed to produce any documents to confirm their purported destruction.

It looks as if Iraq is holding on to prohibited weapons of mass destruction, even as it insists that sanctions be lifted. Why? In early September, a former adviser to Saddam Hussein predicted that Iraq would not give up any more unconventional agents. Instead, Saddam would probably employ them for blackmail and brinkmanship to get sanctions lifted. And failing that, he would use them.[21] General Wafiq Samarrai, former head of Iraqi military intelligence, told me much the same: "Tell the allies that they have to destroy Iraq's biological agents before Saddam can use them." Iraq could attack its neighbors by missile, or America through terrorism. The United States might retaliate with nuclear weapons, but by then "the disaster will already have happened", Samarrai warned. [22]

Would Saddam actually do such a thing? When asked about the possibility of Saddam's using biological agents for terrorism in America, UNSCOM chairman Rolf Ekeus replied, "It is obviously possible." [23] Yet such thoughts seem far from the minds of most U.S. officials, who believe that Saddam is trapped by sanctions and can do no real harm. They feel no urgency about bringing Saddam down; they sense no danger.

## Unfinished Business

YET IF RAMZI YOUSEF is in fact an **Iraqi intelligence agent**, there obviously is a danger. Even if we cannot yet be absolutely certain of this, so many American and allied lives are potentially at stake that it seems the least a responsible government can do is to make every reasonable effort to find out. As Saddam Hussein senses his ever-increasing isolation and sees the prospects for lifting sanctions receding, his desperation may lead him to order other, and even more ghastly, deeds.

If Saddam Hussein still hungers for revenge, the question of Ramzi Yousef's terrorism is much too important to be left solely to the Justice Department, while the FBI continues to withhold critical information from the national security bureaucracies.

The following are among the steps that could and should be taken to address the issue of whether Iraq is behind Ramzi Yousef and to strengthen America's anti-terrorism efforts generally:

1. Bring those who knew Abdul Basit Karim before August 1990 to meet Yousef in prison and pronounce definitely if they are one and the same man.
2. Demand the immediate and unconditional extradition of Abdul Rahman Yasin from Baghdad.
3. Establish a "tiger team", drawn from the best and brightest within the national security bureaucracies, to examine all the information in the U.S. government's possession related to Yousef and his bombing conspiracies. Yousef's apparent use of chemical agents in New York and his threat to use them in the Philippines deserve special attention.
4. Establish appropriate procedures so that whenever a terrorist attack occurs against U.S. targets that might be state-sponsored, a qualified team will address the question of state sponsorship regardless of whether the terror occurs on U.S. soil or whether early arrests are made.

Individually, the pieces of this puzzle--the elusive identity and affiliation of the World Trade Center bomber; the series of explicit threats against the United States issuing from Baghdad; the question of Iraqi biological capabilities--raise troubling questions. Taken together, they provide the outline of a very frightening possibility. **The lack of coordination between the Departments of Justice and State may have created a niche for terrorism within America's borders; while the lack of any adequate response to the two major bombing conspiracies may have already begun to undermine the credibility of**

**the threat of deterrence.** So far, State Department officials have been content to leave the issue of Iraq's possible resort to biological terrorism on the back burner, secure in the belief that the threat of nuclear retaliation will be sufficient deterrent. But Saddam has previously miscalculated the American reaction to his provocations. It would be reassuring to know that, somewhere in the policy-apparatus of the State Department, someone is looking seriously at the possibility of future terrorist acts and at the requirements of effective deterrence.

1. Washington Post, October 7, 1995.

2. Indeed, there is good reason to suspect an Iraqi hand in the November 13, 1995 bombing of the U.S. military office in Riyadh.

3. Interview with Vincent Cannistraro, former Chief of Counterterrorism Operations for the CIA's Counterterrorism Center. There is no formal or legal reason for the FBI position and standard practice. It is largely a matter of protecting bureaucratic turf.

4. Wall Street Journal, September 22, 1995. This point was repeatedly made in the New York Times--April 4, 7, 9 and 26; June 22 and 28; July 26 and 30; August 2 and 22; October 2, 1995.

5. Ken Wasserman, lawyer for one of the defendants in Sheikh Omar et. al. to the author.

6 Author's meeting with federal prosecutors in New York, January, 1995, arranged by the New York District Attorney's office. Another Trade Center prosecutor, since retired, expressed his frustration with the FBI to a Yale Law School alumni gathering, complaining that they had done no "overall policy review." Allan Gerson, former Chief Counsel of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations (1981-5), to the author-

7. Sources in the State Department, CIA, and Pentagon all told me that those at the working level were not getting information from the FBI on Yousef, and were all very unhappy about it,

8. Ismail was indicted in September 1994 and arrested in August 1995 at his family home in Jordan. He was identified by comparing Yousef's telephone records to the passenger manifests of planes leaving JFK the night of the bombing. I believe that Ismail was probably an unwitting participant and meant to be caught. After Yousef was arrested in February, he mentioned the existence of another conspirator and expressed surprise that he had not yet been arrested.

9. John Anticev to FBI plant Emad Salem. Salem taped most of his phone conversations, including those with the FBI.

10. FD-302, [Proffer Session], p.3, Mohammad Abdul Haggag.

11. New York Times, February 12, 1995.

12. See Charles Wallace, Los Angeles Times, May 30, 1995; David Ottaway and Steven Croll, Washington Post, June 5, 1995; Maryanne Weaver, New Yorker, June 5, 1995.

13. Brad White to the author, September 23, 1995.

14. See Laurie Mylroie and James Ring Adams. "Saddam's Germs", The American Spectator, November 1995.

15. a1-Jumhuriyah, October 4, 1994.



16. al-Jumhuriyah, October 5, 1994.

17. al-Jumhuriyah, October 8, 1994.

18. Al-Iraq, April 11, 1995.

19. Al-Quds al-Arabi, June 15, 1995.

20. This was suggested by Frank Gaffney in a Center for Security Policy "Decision Brief," July 7, 1995.

21 "Saddam Nears End-game," The Guardian, September 4, 1995.

22. Telephone interview with Samarra, in Damascus, September 1995.

23. McNeil-Lehrer Newshour, August 28, 1995.

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[The FBI allowed the bombing to happen](#)

[The FBI and the Mad Bombers](#)

## **[SADDAM'S FINGERPRINTS ON 1993 N.Y. BOMBINGS](#)**

Americans, does it matter yet? If not, see [#24](#).

***"We are potentially the most dangerous agency in the country,"***

**FBI Director Louis Freeh** - testimony before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime on June 5, 1997

**1** posted on **10/27/2001 10:50:10 PM PDT** by [Uncle Bill](#)

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To: **Uncle Bill**

She was a guest tonight on Judith Regan's show - Judith publishes her books. She's not a dynamic speaker w/r/t 'style', but she gets an A on substance. Very interesting interview - I urge you to watch the repeat tomorrow night.

**2** posted on **10/27/2001 10:54:56 PM PDT** by [SmartBlonde](#)

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To: **SmartBlonde**

*ON SEPTEMBER 1, 1992, Ramzi Yousef arrived at JFK airport. He presented an Iraqi passport without a U.S. visa, was briefly detained (and fingerprinted) for illegal entry, and **granted asylum pending a hearing**.*

Our first misstake; he should have been deported automatically, then and there. Also added to watch list and refused any future visa, PERIOD.

**3** posted on **10/27/2001 11:10:02 PM PDT** by [John Jamieson](#)

[ [Post Reply](#) | [Private Reply](#) | [To 2](#) | [View Replies](#) | [Report Abuse](#) ]

To: **John Jamieson**

My understanding is that the 'watch list' was routinely ignored from one agency to another. Deportation (IMHO) should ALWAYS be the first option - it's our responsibility to protect our borders FIRST - then worry about 'rights'.

I am greatly troubled by the fact that our government has been spending money and time on saving some minnow in a stream, keeping prayer out of schools, disarming citizens, dumbing down our schools, allowing the social takeover of our institutions by radical feminists, the hijacking of our courts by ultra liberal judges - I could go on - rather than dealing with the REAL problems facing all countries - protecting borders and providing a strong defense.

For 8 years we couldn't be bothered with this type of information - our beloved media spent thousands of man hours on OJ, boxers or briefs, interns and cigars - not Chinese money, giving away satellite technology, our 'can't we all get along' foreign policy with Arafat and Adams.

How many people know about the disappearing laptops in the state department? Or the naked woman found dead in the state department? Or - well, there's a pattern, but then it's all the product of the vast right wing conspiracy.

4 posted on **10/27/2001 11:41:26 PM PDT** by [SmartBlonde](#)  
[ [Post Reply](#) | [Private Reply](#) | [To 3](#) | [View Replies](#) | [Report Abuse](#) ]

To: **Uncle Bill**

why did the fbi not allow salem to render the wtc bomb inert?

5 posted on **10/27/2001 11:44:17 PM PDT** by [mcurb](#)  
[ [Post Reply](#) | [Private Reply](#) | [To 1](#) | [View Replies](#) | [Report Abuse](#) ]

*Comment #6 Removed by Moderator*

To: **SmartBlonde**

You couldn't be more right! WTC would never have happen if we just enforced our own laws. What does a visa mean? It's a ticket to in. You should NOT get in if you don't have a ticket. If you try to get in without a ticket once, you should never get a ticket. Something tells me that many other countries handle this correctly, and many more will in the future.

7 posted on **10/28/2001 12:15:26 AM PDT** by [John Jamieson](#)  
[ [Post Reply](#) | [Private Reply](#) | [To 4](#) | [View Replies](#) | [Report Abuse](#) ]

To: **mcurb**

You may be assuming that the leadership in the FBI under the most corrupt president in the history of the Republic didn't want the bomb to go off. I don't assume that at all. That would slow down the police state, national ID's, totalitarianism, the end of money, gun confiscation, eventual New World Order and coming slavery and death. Americans will beg their elite handlers for it, too. They'll wrap the S.S. plan around their necks.(Safety and Security)

### **Who Bombed The World Trade Center? FBI Bomb Builders Exposed**

The\_Shadow

Paul DeRienzo, Frank Morales and Chris Flash

Oct. 1994/Jan. 1995 Issue

Two cassette tape recordings, obtained by SHADOW reporter Paul DiRienzo of telephone conversations between FBI informant Emad Salem and his Bureau contacts reveal secret U.S. Government complicity in the February 26, 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City in which six people were killed and more than a thousand were injured.

After careful deliberation, the SHADOW believes the question regarding the bombing boils down to the following: Did the FBI do the bombing, utilizing informant Salem as an "agent provocateur" or did it fail to prevent an independent Salem and his associates from doing it? The taped conversations obtained by the SHADOW seem to indicate the former:

FBI Informant Edam Salem: "...we was start already building the bomb which is went off in the World Trade Center. It was built by supervising supervision from the Bureau and the DA and we was all informed about it and we know that the bomb start to be built. By who? By your confidential informant. What a wonderful great case!"

Who is Emad Salem? FBI bomber, Arab double-agent or just greedy? Possibly a combination of all three. Salem is a former Egyptian Army officer who is currently the U.S. government's star witness against Egyptian cleric Dr. Omar Abdel Rahman, whom the FBI says was the ringleader in several bombing plots, including the World Trade Center. Shortly after the bombing at the Twin Towers (World Trade Center) the U.S. government moved to take Salem into the Witness Protection program.

According to the FBI, Salem was aware of the plot ostensibly because he had infiltrated Sheik Rahman and his associates. He was recruited as a government informant shortly after the 1991 assassination of of right- wing militant Rabbi Meir Kahane. As an associate of Rahman, Salem traveled in the cleric's inner circle, surreptitiously recording conversations, and selling his information to the Bureau. But unknown to his FBI handlers, Salem was also secretly recording his conversations with them, most likely to protect himself.

According to attorney Ron Kuby, after Salem was taken into the Witness Protection program on June 24, 1993, he told the feds about the more than 1,000 conversations he had recorded sometime between December, 1991 and June, 1993. Kuby says that while some of these tapes are not significant, others contain substantive dealings with Salem and his FBI handlers. Salem was actually bugging the FBI.

The World Trade Center bombing, along with subsequent alleged plots to bomb prominent targets in New York City, spawned a number of federal indictments and trials resulting in the conviction of more than a dozen men, all of Arabic descent. Salem's exposure as a government informant who had a year earlier infiltrated the group of men later charged in the bombing conspiracy caused many to wonder why he and the FBI failed to provide any warning of the pending World Trade Center bombing.

The answer now appears self-evident. According to William Kuntsler, attorney for Ibrahim El-Gabrowni, one of those accused in the larger bombing case, the entire conspiracy was the product of Salem, the government informant. Kuntsler's law partner Ronald Kuby told the SHADOW that within hours of the World Trade Center blast, Salem checked into a midtown hospital, complaining of a loud ringing in his ears. There is a growing belief that some of the four men charged and since convicted and jailed for the World Trade Center bombing, Mohammed Aboulihma, Mohammed Salameh, Nidal Ayyad and Ahmad Ajaj, may be innocent [victims] of a government frame-up.

Attorneys for those convicted have maintained that the government's case is circumstantial at best, with no evidence or motive linking the accused with the bombing. **The FBI and federal prosecutors have not as yet responded to questions over the lack of warning of the attack on the Twin Towers, despite the strategic placement of their informant.**

Two possible scenarios emerge. One: Salem is a rogue FBI informant who created the conspiracy to bomb the World Trade Center for the money his information about the plot (minus his role) would bring. An attorney for one of the convicted men told the SHADOW that Salem was an FBI informant from November of 1991 to the summer of 1992. The attorney says that the FBI became aware of the World Trade Center bombing plot through informant Salem during this period, but they refused to believe his information or pay

Salem's exorbitant fees. In fact, the feds claimed that they dropped Salem as an informant during the summer of 1992 after he refused or failed a lie detector test. This left Salem with a bombing plot but no one to sell it to.

According to the attorney, Salem let the plot that he hatched go forward and the World Trade Center was bombed so that he could get money and publicity. The attorney says that within 48 hours of the bombing, the FBI requested Salem to help them solve the case. Salem quickly pointed the fingers at the defendants, all followers of Sheik Rahman.

So, who did it? From the above point of view, Salem constructed the bomb plot with those whom he subsequently set up. The U.S. government and its FBI were innocent bystanders who failed to prevent the carnage due to their unwillingness to take Salem's claims seriously, despite his close collaboration with Bureau agents for the better part of a year.

The other scenario looks like this: Informant Salem organized the bomb plot with the "supervision" of the FBI and the District Attorney as part of a classic entrapment setup. He befriended certain individuals, possibly some of the defendants, convinced them that his intentions to bomb the World Trade Center were sincere, and convinced them to get involved. The bomb goes off. Greedy Salem, with his ears still ringing, sells out his accomplices while attempting to sell more information to the Bureau. In order to protect him and their relationship, the FBI sequesters Salem and utilizes him against the real target of the FBI, Sheik Rahman.

In one of the taped conversations between Salem and "Special Agent" John Anticev, Salem refers to him and the Bureau's involvement in making the bomb that blew up the World Trade Center. As Salem is pressing for money while emphasizing his value as a Bureau asset, the conversation moves in and out of references to the bombing and the FBI's knowledge of the bomb making:

FBI: But ah basically nothing has changed. I'm just telling you for my own sake that nothing, that this isn't a salary but you got paid regularly for good information. I mean the expenses were a little bit out of the ordinary and it was really questioned. Don't tell Nancy I told you this. (Nancy Floyd is another FBI agent who worked with Salem in his informant capacity. The second tape obtained by the SHADOW is of a telephone conversation between Salem and Floyd -Ed.)

SALEM: Well, I have to tell her of course.

FBI: Well then, if you have to, you have to.

SALEM: Yeah, I mean because the lady was being honest and I was being honest and everything was submitted with receipts and now it's questionable.

FBI: It's not questionable, it's like a little out of the' ordinary.

SALEM: Okay. I don't think it was. If that what you think guys, fine, but I don't think that because we was start already building the bomb which is went off in the World Trade Center. It was built by supervising supervision from the Bureau and the DA and we was all informed about it and we know what the bomb start to be built. By who? By your confidential informant. What a wonderful great case! And then he put his head in the sand I said "Oh, no, no, that's not true, he is son of a bitch." (Deep breath) Okay. It's built with a different way in another place and that's it.

FBI: No, don't make any rash decisions. I'm just trying to be as honest with you as I can.

SALEM: Of course, I appreciate that.

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## **Tapes in Bombing Plot Show Informer and F.B.I. at Odds**

**By RALPH BLUMENTHAL**

**The New York Times**

**Section A; Page 1; Column 4; Metropolitan Desk**

**October 27, 1993, Wednesday, Late Edition - Final**

The informer at the center of the Government's case in the plot to bomb New York City landmarks had a volatile relationship with his handlers, often quarreling with F.B.I. agents who used him to infiltrate a group of Muslim extremists who have been charged in the plot, according to transcripts of secretly taped conversations.

---

**"You were informed. Everything is ready. The day and the time. Boom. Lock them up and that's that. That's why I feel so bad."**

---

Transcripts of the hundreds of hours of tapes -- which were recorded by the informer, Emad A. Salem, without the knowledge of the F.B.I. -- were distributed to defense lawyers yesterday. Although Judge Michael B. Mukasey ordered the lawyers to keep them secret, a copy of the transcripts was made available to The New York Times.

The tapes offer a rare glimpse into the sensitive relationship between the confidential informer and the law-enforcement officials with whom he worked. They also reveal for the first time how Federal and police agents instructed him to "pump up" a suspect for information and negotiate a \$1 million fee from the Government for his services.

In several instances, the transcripts show Mr. Salem lecturing Federal agents on how to do their jobs, criticizing their surveillance and interview techniques. In one instance, he suggests that they tell a possible source that his phone was tapped, when in fact it was not, and that they confront the man and push him hard for information. "Don't give him a chance to think," Mr. Salem is quoted as saying. "If he will think it's, 'I want my lawyer.' Then bingo, you are gone."

Aid for Defense?

By creating the so-called bootleg tapes, Mr. Salem has given ammunition to defense lawyers who argue that he entrapped the 15 defendants charged with conspiring to bomb New York City landmarks.

In one instance that shows how Mr. Salem was prompted by Federal agents, Mr. Anticev is quoted as saying, "You know, pump, maybe kind of pump him up a little bit." The agent tells Mr. Salem to stress "the loyalty to his cousin." The target in that instance, Ibrahim A. Elgabrowni, is a cousin of the man who was charged with shooting Mr. Kahane and now a defendant in a plot to bomb New York City targets.

In another instance, Mr. Anticev is quoted as instructing Mr. Salem to press to learn whether Mr. Elgabrowni or his associates were hiding explosives. He is quoted as telling Mr. Salem not to worry about being exposed as the source of the information. "We'll just know where stuff exists and where it is," Mr. Anticev is quoted as saying. "And then we'll make our move."

"There's no danger, you know," he says later. "We can be sneaky and take our time."

Mr. Salem has dropped from sight since the June arrests, and an effort to get in touch with him through the witness protection program of the



Scattered through the hundreds of pages of transcripts are many instances in which the Government agents appear to encourage Mr. Salem to lead the suspects to incriminate themselves. Defense lawyers have long contended that the Government crossed a legal line, instructing Mr. Salem in a fishing expedition that became entrapment. Although the bulk of the transcripts does not appear to show the agents steering Mr. Salem toward improper or illegal conduct, whether they did so finally will be resolved in court.

### Many New Details

Among the details included in the transcripts are the following:

\*A reference by Mr. Salem to 12 possible bombs and hitherto unmentioned targets, including Grand Central Terminal, the Empire State Building and Times Square.

\*A New York City police detective working with the F.B.I. told Mr. Salem, who was getting \$500 a week from the Government, that if he wanted a \$1 million informer's fee, he should press for \$1.5 million and then negotiate.

\*An unusual suggestion that some of the money sought by Mr. Salem was going to be put up by private individuals.

\*A reference from Mr. Salem, in a conversation with an F.B.I. agent, to an argument between F.B.I. officials over whether Mr. Salem should remain an unidentified informer or surface as a witness to testify at trial.

\*A major defendant in the World Trade Center trial was tipped off by a neighbor to an elaborate F.B.I. ruse to search the Brooklyn apartment of another suspect, Mahmud Abouhalima, and replace explosives in his apartment with false explosives supplied by the F.B.I.

\*Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman, a defendant in the second bombing case, was using a fax machine to command anti-Communist Muslim rebels, moving forces from Pakistan to Afghanistan and dealing with a code-named agent from Hamas, the militant Palestinian group, Mr. Salem told the F.B.I.

The transcripts cover Mr. Salem's dealings with the suspects and his work for the Government over a period of at least two years, going back to the trial in the killing

Federal Marshals Service was rejected. But a member of the defense team said he was spotted within the last month in Manhattan.

Mr. Salem, a 43-year-old former Egyptian Army officer and confidant of the radical Egyptian cleric, Mr. Abdel Rahman, surfaced as the Government's mole after a June 24 F.B.I. raid on a Queens garage that the Government said smashed an extremist Muslim plot to blow up the United Nations, Lincoln and Holland tunnels and the Manhattan Federal building housing the F.B.I., and to assassinate Senator Alfonse M. D'Amato and State Assemblyman Dov Hikind, among other targets.

The unauthorized tapes came to light immediately after the raid as Mr. Salem hurriedly evacuated his West Side Manhattan apartment and was quickly identified by associates of the sheik and by law-enforcement authorities as the "confidential informant" who had secretly gathered evidence, including many tape-recorded conversations, against those later charged as conspirators in the case.

### Tapes Left Behind

In the belongings Mr. Salem left behind either carelessly or by design were cassettes of the tapes he had secretly recorded with the F.B.I.

Because these could shed light on the prosecution's evidence-gathering methods to the point of possible entrapment, defense lawyers convinced Judge Mukasey that they should gain access to this material as well as to Mr. Salem's authorized recordings, turned over earlier.

Even before he came in from the cold of his undercover role in June, the burly, bearded Mr. Salem was an enigmatic figure, a private investigator who supported himself as a jewelry designer, a security guard for the sheik who freely gave interviews to news reporters.

Officials in Cairo say he entered the Egyptian Army as a private and during an 18-year career fought in the 1973 war with Israel and was "pensioned out" as a senior officer while continuing a relationship with Egyptian military

of Rabbi Meir Kahane. Mr. Salem recorded the conversations with Government agents on his own, without the knowledge or consent of his contacts in the

intelligence. His American wife, from whom he was divorced this year but to whom he is still close, told New York Newsday last week that he had recently sent a set of the bootleg tapes home to Egyptian authorities with a visiting relative.

In the United States for about six years, he lived most recently in a fifth-floor suite at the Bretton Hall residence hotel at 2350 Broadway.

A news reporter invited to interview him there shortly after the World Trade Center bombing found herself on camera as Mr. Salem insisted videotaping the encounter.

He showed her photographs of what he said was his sandbagged bunker in the 1973 war, the reviewing stand where former President Anwar el-Sadat was assassinated in 1981 and his grave site. He also showed pictures of people who had apparently been tortured: a woman with cigarette burns and a man confined in a cage.

He said that he prayed at the Abu Bakr mosque in Brooklyn and the al-Salaam mosque in Jersey City, where Sheik Omar often preached, and that he had known the cleric from Egypt. He said he was attracted by Mr. Rahman's aura of power and fearlessness.

### Remembered as Benefactor

Associates in Jersey City said they remembered Mr. Salem as a generous benefactor of the mosques and of the sheik himself. He also collected money for the defense of El Sayyid A. Nosair, an Egyptian contractor charged in the 1990 assassination of the militant Jewish leader, Rabbi Meir Kahane. Mr. Nosair was acquitted of that killing but convicted of related assault and weapons charges. He is also one of the 15 defendants in the bombing conspiracy case.

Mr. Salem also had dealings with Mr. Elgabrowny, a relative of Mr. Nosair for whom Mr. Salem said he helped obtain a pistol permit from the New York City Police Department.

Associates and lawyers of some of the defendants said that Mr. Salem appeared rather abruptly on the scene around the time of the Kahane killing

F.B.I., apparently to use as an insurance policy to hold the Government to its promises of money and protection.

and that they now suspect he was sent to infiltrate the circle around Mr. Nosair.

Some of the most striking passages in the transcripts show Mr. Salem agonizing over what he suggests was the failure of the F.B.I., despite his information, to halt the Feb. 26 bombing of the trade center, in which six people were killed. Although Mr. Salem is not a witness in that case, he was working with the Government at that time.

**"They told me that 'we want to set this,' " Mr. Salem said, referring to the bomb in a conversation on April 1 with John Anticev, one of the F.B.I. agents he reported to, and sometimes complained to others about. " 'What's the right place to put this?' "**

**Then he added, still speaking to the agent: "You were informed. Everything is ready. The day and the time. Boom. Lock them up and that's that. That's why I feel so bad."**

Federal officials have acknowledged in the past that they dropped Mr. Salem as an informer sometime before the trade center bombing over what they said was his reluctance to wear a body recorder, as well as other disagreements. They said he never provided detailed information of the attack in advance but that they began using his services again after the bombing and credited him with foiling the related but separate plot to bomb the United Nations, Holland and Lincoln tunnels and the Federal building housing the F.B.I. in Manhattan.

The case is expected to come to trial next year, perhaps shortly after the end of the related trial of four men charged with bombing the World Trade Center. As the most important witness, Mr. Salem is expected to be called upon to verify tapes he made of conversations with suspects and testify on his dealings with them.

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**The transcripts do not make clear the extent to which Federal authorities knew that there was a plan to bomb the World Trade Center, merely that**

they knew that a bombing of some sort was being discussed. But Mr. Salem's evident anguish at not being able to thwart the trade center blast is a recurrent theme in the transcripts. In one of the first numbered tapes, Mr. Salem is quoted as

**Tapes Depict Proposal to Thwart Bomb Used  
in Trade Center Blast  
By RALPH BLUMENTHAL  
The New York Times  
Section A; Page 1; Column 4; Metropolitan  
Desk  
October 28, 1993, Thursday, Late Edition -  
Final  
Correction Appended**

Law-enforcement officials were told that terrorists were building a bomb that was eventually used to blow up the World Trade Center, and they planned to thwart the plotters by secretly substituting harmless powder for the explosives, an informer said after the blast.

---

"Do you deny," Mr. Salem says he told the other agent, "your supervisor is the main reason of bombing the World Trade Center?" Mr. Salem said Mr. Anticev did not deny it. "We was handling the case perfectly well until the supervisor came and messed it up, upside down."

---

The informer was to have helped the plotters build the bomb and supply the fake powder, but the plan was called off by an F.B.I. supervisor who had other ideas about how the informer, Emad A. Salem, should be used, the informer said.

The account, which is given in the transcript of hundreds of hours of tape recordings Mr. Salem secretly made of his talks with law-enforcement agents, portrays the authorities as in a far better position than previously known to foil the Feb. 26 bombing of New York City's tallest towers. The explosion left six people dead, more than 1,000 injured and damages in excess of half a billion dollars. Four men are now on trial in Manhattan Federal Court in that attack.

Mr. Salem, a 43-year-old former Egyptian army officer, was used by the Government to penetrate a circle of Muslim extremists now charged in two bombing cases: the World Trade Center attack and a foiled plot to destroy the United Nations, the Hudson River tunnels and other New York City landmarks. He is the crucial witness in the second bombing case, but his work for the Government was erratic, and for months before the trade center blast, he was feuding with the F.B.I.

Supervisor 'Messed It Up'

After the bombing, he resumed his undercover work. In an undated transcript of a conversation from that period, Mr. Salem recounts a talk he had had earlier with an agent about an unnamed F.B.I. supervisor who, he said, "came and messed it up."

"He requested to meet me in the hotel," Mr. Salem says of the supervisor. "He requested to make me to testify and if he didn't push for that, we'll be going building the bomb with a phony powder and grabbing the people who was involved in it. But since you, we didn't do that."

The transcript quotes Mr. Salem as saying that he wanted to complain to F.B.I. headquarters in

telling agent Floyd: "Since the bomb went off I feel terrible. I feel bad. I feel here is people who don't listen."

Ms. Floyd seems to commiserate, saying, "hey, I mean it wasn't like you didn't try and I didn't try."

In an apparent reference to Mr. Salem's complaints about the supervisor, Agent Floyd adds, "You can't force people to do the right thing."

The investigator involved in the case who would not be quoted by name said that Mr. Salem may have been led to believe by the agents that they were blameless for any mistakes. It was a classic agent's tactic, he said, to "blame the boss for all that's bad and take credit for all the good things."

In another point in the transcripts, Mr. Salem recounts a conversation he said he had with Mr. Anticev, saying, "I said, 'Guys, now you saw this bomb went off and you both know that we could avoid that.' " At another point, Mr. Salem says, "You get paid, guys, to prevent problems like this from happening."

Mr. Salem talks of the plan to substitute harmless powder for explosives during another conversation with agent Floyd. In that conversation, he recalls a previous discussion with Mr. Anticev.

"Do you deny," Mr. Salem says he told the other agent, "your supervisor is the main reason of bombing the World Trade Center?" Mr. Salem said Mr. Anticev did not deny it. "We was handling the case perfectly well until the supervisor came and messed it up, upside down."

The transcripts reflect an effort to keep Mr. Salem as an intelligence asset who would not have to go public or testify.

A police detective working with the F.B.I., Louis Napoli, assures Mr. Salem in one conversation, "We can give you total immunity towards prosecution, towards, ah, ah, testifying." But he adds: "I still have to tell you that if you're the only game in town in regards to the information," then, he says, "you'll have to testify."



Washington about the bureau's failure to stop the bombing, but was dissuaded by an agent identified as John Anticev.

"He said, I don't think that the New York people would like the things out of the New York office to go to Washington, D.C.," Mr. Salem said Mr. Anticev had told him.

Another agent, identified as Nancy Floyd, does not dispute Mr. Salem's account, but rather, appears to agree with it, saying of the New York people: "Well, of course not, because they don't want to get their butts chewed."

Mary Jo White, who, as the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York is prosecuting defendants in two related bombing cases, declined yesterday to comment on the Salem allegations or any other aspect of the cases. An investigator close to the case who refused to be identified further said, "We wish he would have saved the world," but called Mr. Salem's claims "figments of his imagination."

The transcripts, which are stamped "draft" and compiled from 70 tapes recorded secretly during the last two years by Mr. Salem, were turned over to defense lawyers in the second bombing case by the Government on Tuesday under a judge's order barring lawyers from disseminating them. A large portion of the material was made available to The New York Times.

In a letter to Federal Judge Michael B. Mukasey, Andrew C. McCarthy, an assistant United States attorney, said that he had learned of the tapes while debriefing Mr. Salem and that the informer had then voluntarily turned them over. Other Salem tapes and transcripts were being withheld pending Government review, of "security and other issues," Mr. McCarthy said.

William M. Kunstler, a defense lawyer in the case, accused the Government this week of improper delay in handing over all the material. The transcripts he had seen, he said, "were filled with all sorts of Government misconduct." But citing the judge's order, he said he could not provide any details.

## Studied for Signs of Illegality

The transcripts are being closely studied by lawyers looking for signs that Mr. Salem and the law enforcement officials, in their zeal to gather evidence, may have crossed the legal line into entrapment, a charge that defense counsel have already raised.

But the transcripts show that the officials were concerned that by associating with bombing defendants awaiting trial in the Metropolitan Correctional Center, Mr. Salem might have been accused of spying on the defense.

In an undated conversation, Mr. Anticev tries to explain the perils.

"We're not allowed to have any information regarding that," he tells Mr. Salem. "That could jeopardize, you know, if you go see a lawyer, ah, you know, with the defendant's friend or whatever like that, and you're talking about things we're not suppose to, ah, condone that. We're not supposed to make people do that for us. That's like sacred ground. You can't be privileged, ah, you can't know what's being talked about at all."

Mr. Salem seems to bridle. "I, I, I don't think that's right," he says.

The agent insists: "Yeah, but that's just a guideline. If that ever happened, ah, you can back and reported on the meeting between, ah, you know, Kunstler and Mohammad A. Elgabrown. Forget about it. I mean a lot of people ah the case can get thrown out. You understand?" The references were to the defense lawyer, Mr. Kunstler, and his client in the second bomb case, Ibrahim A. Elgabrown.

Mr. Salem seems to reluctantly agree.

"They want you to have a hand in it," Mr. Anticev goes on, "but they're afraid that when you get that kind of, ah, too deep, like me, it's almost like, especially with all this legal stuff going on right now."

If it were just intelligence gathering, the agent says, "You can do anything you want. You could go crazy over there and have a good time. Do you know what I mean?"

The agent goes on: "But now that everything is going to

court and there is legal stuff and it's just, it's just too hard. It's just too tricky, if, this, you know. And then there's the fact if you come by with the big information, he did this, ah, let me talk about this with the other people again."

"O.K.," Mr. Salem says. "All right. O.K."

CORRECTION-DATE: October 29, 1993, Friday

CORRECTION:

An article yesterday about accounts of a plot to build a bomb that was eventually exploded at the World Trade Center referred imprecisely in some copies to what Federal officials knew about the plan before the blast. Transcripts of tapes made secretly by an informant, Emad A. Salem, quote him as saying he warned the Government that a bomb was being built. But the transcripts do not make clear the extent to which the Federal authorities knew that the target was the World Trade Center.

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To: **Uncle Bill**

*...the bomb went off, on--let it be well noted--the second anniversary of the ending of the Gulf War.*

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11 posted on **10/28/2001 1:14:43 AM PDT** by [Robert Lomax](#)

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To: **ratcat**

Thanks for the kind words ratcat. God bless.

12 posted on **10/28/2001 1:44:44 AM PDT** by [Uncle Bill](#)

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**[Iraqi Complicity in the World Trade Center Bombing and Beyond](#)**

**[Why the Bojinka Blackout?](#)**

**[Seeking Saddam's smoking gun: Links between Iraq, Osama Bin Laden and recent major terrorist attacks](#)**

**[An interview with Laurie Mylroie - Author of Study of Revenge: Saddam Hussein's Unfinished War Against America](#)**

*"New York law enforcement suspected Iraqi involvement. The World Trade Center bombing occurred on*

*the second anniversary of the Gulf War cease-fire. According to the authorities, many Iraqis were peripherally involved. In fact, the last remaining fugitive charged in the bombing is an Iraqi. He came from Baghdad and fled back to Baghdad.*

*In addition, the bomb produced a huge effect. Americans may not really realize how big it was because most of the damage was to the basement floors. The bomb left a crater six stories tall. Jim Fox, who headed New York's FBI bureau then and led the investigation in New York, once told me that—after a hard day's work searching for evidence—he would often sit and relax at the edge of the crater, stare down into the enormous hole, and ask himself, "Who the hell did this?"*

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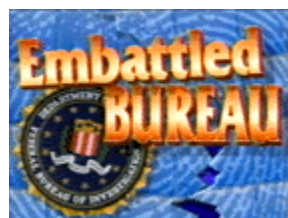
To: **Uncle Bill**

I'm glad you said it. Nowadays, when you say things like that, somebody pulls the thread.

14 posted on **10/28/2001 8:06:59 AM PST** by [mcurb](#)

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To: **OKCSubmariner; NotJustAnotherPrettyFace**



### **Enemies and "Assets"**

By William Norman Grigg

[Vol. 13, No. 05](#)

March 3, 1997

## **The World Trade Center bombers had some curious connections**

Following the outbreak of communist revolutions across Europe in 1848, Frederic Bastiat, a French champion of free enterprise, took note of the fact that many of his government's supposedly anti-communist policies were actually creating communist-style controls over the economic and political life of his country. As a member of the French Assembly, Bastiat chided his government for "concocting the antidote and the poison in the same laboratory" and for devoting "half of its resources to destroying the evil it has done with the other half."

Our own federal government's ever-escalating "war" on terrorism displays similar dynamics. The same Clinton Administration that urges the expansion of federal power -- and the contraction of personal liberties -- in the struggle against terrorism has eagerly courted the Syrian terror regime and has played host to representatives of the IRA, the Russian mafia, the Red Chinese arms-smuggling industry, and Muslim terrorist factions. This same bizarre duality is apparent in the Administration's domestic "anti- terrorism" initiatives. As the November 11th Washington Post reported, "Since the Oklahoma City bombing [of] April 19, 1995, the FBI, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF), and other federal law enforcement agencies have embarked on a preemptive strategy to uncover domestic terrorist conspiracies while they are in the planning stages. This strategy requires aggressive and potentially controversial tactics as investigators infiltrate groups and bring charges on the basis of allegedly criminal plans that are conceived but not carried out."

## **Federal Entrapment**

The new federal anti-terrorism strategy has resulted in the arrest, prosecution, and (in some cases) conviction of militia members on conspiracy charges in Georgia, Arizona, Washington, and West Virginia. **However, it has also produced convincing evidence that the federal informants have acted as agents provocateurs, urging militia members to undertake potentially criminal actions.**

In the case of the "Viper Team" in Phoenix, for example, it was a "confidential informant" who infiltrated the militia and suggested that the group rob banks in order to finance its activities. (For more on the "Viper" case, see page 19.) In the Georgia militia case, federal informants who had infiltrated the militia urged its leaders to manufacture pipe bombs; after failing to win support for their idea, the informants planted pipe-bomb components on property belonging to the militia group's leaders.

In the more recent case of the Mountaineer Militia in West Virginia, an FBI informant -- posing as an arms dealer -- asked militia leader Floyd Ray Looker to sell him plans of a local FBI computer facility for \$50,000. Although U.S. Attorney William D. Wilmoth has acknowledged that "the facility itself was never in any direct danger" from the Mountaineer Militia, seven members of the group were arrested on terrorism charges on October 11th in what the Washington Post called an "unprecedented use of a new anti-terrorism law...." None of the militias targeted for "preemptive" federal action has a track record of violence. What would happen if federal agents were to use the same tactics on an authentic terrorist cell -- one composed of genuinely ruthless people possessing both the will and the means to carry out lethal acts of political violence?

## Bungling or Abetting?

One answer was provided by the February 26, 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City, an attack that killed six Americans, wounded more than a thousand others, inflicted \$500 million in damage, and dispelled America's sense of immunity to international terrorism. The leaders of the radical Islamic network responsible for the bombing, who later planned a campaign of urban terrorism which could have claimed the lives of thousands of Americans, were given financial aid and training by the CIA. Furthermore, at several critical junctures where the conspiracy could have been exposed and its leaders arrested, **federal law enforcement either ignored that network or actually provided crucial help to it.**

The central figure of that terrorist network was **Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman**, the "spiritual leader" of the Egyptian extremist group Gama al-Islamiya. In January 1996, Sheik Omar was convicted of "seditious conspiracy" and sentenced to life in prison for his part in planning the bombing; his nine co-conspirators were handed sentences ranging from 25 years to life. The sheik's defense team attempted to depict the prosecution of their client as an instance of anti-Muslim persecution. However, Sheik Omar's religious vocation, unlike that of the vast majority of devout, peaceful Muslims, was steeped in violence and hatred.

Sheik Omar and his followers were arrested in June 1993, six months after the Trade Center bombing; at the time of the arrest, some of the plotters were literally mixing chemicals to manufacture bombs. Following the January 1996 convictions of Sheik Omar and his disciples, Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew C. McCarthy declared, "There is a support system for terrorism in the United States whose designer is Sheik Abdel-Rahman.... [It would be] naive to think it has been destroyed." According to [Two Seconds Under the World](#), an account of the Trade Center bombing by New York Newsday's Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative team of Jim Dwyer, David Kocieniewski, Deidre Murphy, and Peg Tyre, Sheik Omar's followers have established cells in Texas, California, Illinois, and Michigan. Although Sheik Omar may have been the "designer" of this terrorist network, its "support system," as we will see, included the CIA, the U.S. Army, and -- arguably -- federal law enforcement agencies.

## CIA Connection

Sheik Omar, who was accused of complicity in the plot to assassinate Anwar Sadat, has devoted his adult life to the overthrow of the secular Egyptian government and the propagation of his variety of Islam. In 1987, the U.S. State Department placed Sheik Omar's name on its "watch list" of non-Americans believed

to be involved in terrorism. However, this did not prevent the CIA from enlisting Sheik Omar as a "valuable asset" in covert operations involving the Afghan mujahideen during the 1980s.

Between 1980 and 1989, the CIA pumped more than \$3 billion in aid into the mujahideen, the Islamic resistance to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The mujahideen's rank and file was composed of brave and motivated men who displayed astonishing courage in their effort to evict the Soviets from Afghanistan. However, as veteran foreign correspondent Kurt Lohbeck documented in his study *Holy War, Unholy Victory: Eyewitness to the CIA's Secret War in Afghanistan*, the CIA invested most of its aid in the least combat-worthy and most anti-American factions of the mujahideen. Among the CIA's dubious beneficiaries was Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman.

Writing in the May 1996 issue of *The Atlantic Monthly*, foreign correspondent Mary Anne Weaver pointed out that it was in Peshawar, Pakistan in the late 1980s that Sheik Omar "became involved with U.S. and Pakistani intelligence officials who were orchestrating the war" against the Soviets, and that the "sixty or so CIA and Special Forces officers based there considered him a 'valuable asset' ... and overlooked his anti-Western message and incitement to holy war because they wanted him to help unify the mujahideen groups."

Sheik Omar and his associates created an institution in Peshawar, Pakistan called the Service Office, which recruited Muslims from around the world as volunteers to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. However, as Weaver pointed out, "Money flowed into the Service Office from the Muslim Brotherhood" -- one of the most radical and violently anti-Western factions of the Pan-Islamic movement. Along with hundreds of millions of dollars from Saudi Arabia, Muslim Brotherhood money was distributed through branches of the Service Office in Europe and the United States, thereby providing a ready slush fund for terrorists and anti-Western agitators. While the Service Office sluiced money into the coffers of terrorists, Sheik Omar preached his gospel of jihad in Pakistan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, and in Islamic population centers in Turkey, Germany, England, and even the United States -- despite his listing on the State Department's "watch list." Sheik Omar's CIA-aided access to the United States continued after the Soviets vacated Afghanistan in 1989.

On May 10, 1990, Sheik Omar was granted a one-year visa from a CIA agent posing as an official at the U.S. Consulate in Khartoum, Sudan, and he arrived in New York in July 1990. In November of the same year Sheik Omar's visa was revoked, and the State Department advised the Immigration and Naturalization Service to be on the lookout for him. So attentive was the INS to this advisory that it granted Sheik Omar a green card just five months later.

## **Terrorist Network**

The American-based radicals who sponsored Sheik Omar's 1990 trip to the U.S. included Mahmud Abouhalima, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood and a CIA-supported veteran of the Afghan campaign. Abouhalima had networked with radical Muslims and **American Black Panthers** since the mid- 1980s. Also helping to make arrangements for the sheik's visit was Mustafa Shalabi, the Brooklyn-based director of Alkifah, a support fund for mujahideen fighters. Another leader of Sheik Omar's American network was El Sayyid Nosair, an Egyptian expatriate who was later acquitted of the 1990 murder of Jewish militant Rabbi Meir Kahane.

Abouhalima and Nosair were eventually among those convicted of conspiring with Sheik Omar to wage urban warfare in the United States, and in that campaign they made use of skills imparted to them by the CIA and the U.S. military. During the conspiracy trial, attorneys for Sheik Omar and his disciples introduced a file documenting that in 1989, the U.S. Army had sent Special Forces Sergeant Ali A. Mohammed to Jersey City to provide training for mujahideen recruits, including Abouhalima and Nosair. But even as



Abouhalima and Nosair underwent that training, according to Two Seconds Under the World, the FBI had them under surveillance as possible terrorists. Although Sheik Omar provided "spiritual" guidance to his network, the Abu Nidal-trained Nosair was the conspiracy's field commander, and Abouhalima was his most important lieutenant.

The FBI engaged in a curiously timed fit of incompetence when the opportunity arose for a preemptive strike against Sheik Omar's network. Following the shooting of Rabbi Meir Kahane in November 1990, the FBI seized and impounded 49 boxes of documents from Nosair's New Jersey apartment; the cache included bomb-making instructions, a hit list of public figures (including Kahane), paramilitary training materials, detailed pictures of famous buildings (including the World Trade Center), and sermons by Sheik Omar urging his followers to "destroy the edifices of capitalism."

**But the FBI made none of the evidence available to New York City Assistant District Attorney William Greenbaum, who prosecuted the case. In fact, the FBI ignored the material until after the Trade Center bombing in 1993.** Veteran radical lawyer William Kunstler offered his services as Nosair's defense attorney. Kunstler deployed his entire arsenal of sophistries, and presiding Judge William Schlesinger of the New York State Supreme Court granted Kunstler extraordinary procedural latitude (including the privilege of dismissing white potential jurors on racial grounds). Schlesinger's penchant for Kunstler was so pronounced that he invited the notorious Marxist barrister to a Christmas party in his chambers during jury deliberations.

Hamstrung by the FBI's decision to withhold the evidence collected at Nosair's apartment, and stymied by Judge Schlesinger's visible partiality toward the defense, prosecutor Greenbaum was unable to secure a murder conviction against Nosair. When the verdict was announced on December 20, 1991, Kunstler was carried triumphantly away from the courtroom on the burly shoulders of Muslim Brotherhood terrorist Mahmud Abouhalima. Nosair, who was convicted on lesser firearms-related charges, began a seven-year term in Attica prison, where he continued to direct the affairs of Sheik Omar's terrorist network.

The violence pulsating through Sheik Omar's network was not directed solely at predictable enemies like Kahane. By March 1991, Sheik Omar and his associates had seized control of the Alkifah fund, which had by then swollen to an estimated \$2 million -- and Shalabi, the fund's manager, was found murdered shortly after a confrontation with three of Sheik Omar's disciples. The CIA-originated fund helped finance Nosair's trial defense. It was also used to procure many of the bomb components that were assembled under the expert supervision of Afghan terrorist Ramzi Yousef, who was imported by the Sheik Omar network in late 1992.

## **FBI Foreknowledge**

Yousef was convicted on September 8, 1996 of plotting a 48-hour campaign of bombings against American commercial flights over the Pacific Ocean. The campaign would have targeted a total of 12 jetliners and as many as 4,000 passengers. Yousef is also accused of carrying out the December 11, 1994 bombing of a Philippine jetliner that killed a Japanese passenger, as well as plotting to assassinate Pope John Paul II. Yousef met Abouhalima in Afghanistan in 1988, and it was Abouhalima who brought the Afghan terrorist to the United States in September 1992 on behalf of Sheik Omar's network.

Shortly after Yousef's arrival, the FBI subpoenaed two dozen of Sheik Omar's followers and questioned them about the sheik, Nosair, and Abouhalima. However, no arrests were made, no grand jury investigation was launched, and **the FBI chose to downgrade its scrutiny of Omar's network -- just as plans were being finalized for the Trade Center bombing. This curious decision is even more peculiar in light of the fact that the FBI had obtained intelligence on the network's capabilities**

## **and intentions from Emad A. Salem, a former Egyptian Army officer and FBI informant who served as Omar's security guard.**

Salem's relationship with the FBI was turbulent, and there were suggestions of impropriety in his personal contacts with FBI handler Nancy Floyd. However, he had repeatedly warned the FBI that Nosair was running a terrorist ring out of his prison cell, and he had supplied detailed descriptions of the Sheik Omar network's plans. But the FBI was doubtful of Salem's reliability and severed its contacts with him seven months before the bombing.

In the aftermath of the Trade Center bombing, the FBI renewed its association with Salem, paying him a reported \$1 million to infiltrate Sheik Omar's group once again. Salem secretly recorded many of his conversations with law enforcement agents, **including exchanges in which it was revealed that the FBI had detailed prior knowledge of the Trade Center bomb plot.** According to Salem, the FBI had planned to sabotage the Trade Center bomb by replacing the explosive components with an inert powder. The October 28, 1993 New York Times reported that in one conversation Salem recalled assurances from an FBI supervisor that the agency's plan called for "building the bomb with a phony powder and grabbing the people who [were] involved in [the plot]." However, the supervisor, in Salem's words, "messed it up."

Salem recalled that when he expressed a desire to lodge a protest with FBI headquarters, he was told by special agent John Anticev that "the New York people [wouldn't] like the things out of the New York office to go to Washington, DC." Unappeased, Salem rebuked Anticev: "... you saw this bomb went off and you ... know that we could avoid that.... You get paid, guys, to prevent problems like this from happening."

Perhaps the most remarkable illustration of the depth of the FBI's knowledge of the Sheik Omar network came after the World Trade Center bombing, when the Bureau employed Salem's services as an informant once again. As the Wall Street Journal reported, from March to June 1993 Salem "helped organize the 'battle plan' that the government alleged included plots to bomb the United Nations and FBI buildings in New York, and the Holland and Lincoln tunnels beneath the Hudson River. Working with a charismatic Sudanese man named Siddig Ali, a follower of Sheik Omar, Mr. Salem recruited seven local Muslims to scout targets, plan tactics and obtain chemicals and electrical parts for bombs...." By the time the FBI closed in on the plotters on June 23rd, it had literally hours of videotapes documenting the conspiracy in intimate detail -- including footage of conspirators mixing fertilizer and diesel fuel to build a bomb.

Predictably, defense attorneys for Sheik Omar and his followers insisted that Salem's actions amounted to entrapment. While the court rejected this defense, the FBI's proficiency at using Salem to assemble a radical Muslim terrorist cell is unsettling, to say the least. Clearly, Salem knew his way around the sheik's network, and was well-versed in the techniques of terrorism; just as clearly, the FBI knew how to make use of Salem's abilities. It is difficult to believe that the FBI was incapable of cracking down preemptively on the sheik's followers before the Trade Center bombing.

## **Poison and Antidote**

However, the fact that Sheik Omar's network consistently benefited from the actions of the federal government -- from direct CIA aid to instances of peculiar neglect by the FBI -- suggests that the cabal should be considered as much a creature of our federal government as it was a creation of a particular strain of Muslim extremism. Furthermore, the influence and activities of Sheik Omar's co-conspirators are not limited to the United States.

As Mary Anne Weaver pointed out in The Atlantic Monthly, "the CIA helped to train and fund what eventually became an international network of highly disciplined and effective Islamic militants -- and a new breed of terrorists as well." According to Weaver, the CIA's handiwork is on display across the Middle East

-- in the December 1995 car bomb attack in a crowded market in Peshawar, Pakistan that killed 36 people and wounded 120 more, and also in two nearly identical car bombings in November 1995 that targeted U.S. military advisers in Saudi Arabia and the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan. The same network could also be considered a prime suspect in last summer's unsolved terrorist attack on U.S. troops in Daharan, Saudi Arabia, terrorist bombings in Algeria and the Philippines, and perhaps even the downing of TWA Flight 800. Weaver quoted a former U.S. diplomat who told her, "The common element in all these attacks -- whether in Cairo or Riyadh, Islamabad or Algiers, Europe or New York -- is today's equivalent of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade" -- namely, a CIA-trained terrorist network.

Some intelligence analysts describe the emergence of that network as an example of "blowback" -- unintended negative fallout from a covert operation. However, a more accurate analysis might make use of Frederic Bastiat's metaphor of government creating the poison and the antidote in the same laboratory. The same power elite that created the "poison" of the post-Afghanistan terrorist network stands poised with an equally dreadful "antidote." As Richard Haass, director of national security programs at the influential Council on Foreign Relations, asserted in a Washington Post op-ed column, the war against terrorism will require **"a willingness to compromise some of our civil liberties, including accepting more frequent phone taps and surveillance. Those who would resist paying such a price should keep in mind that terrorism could well get worse in coming years."**

In such fashion, American citizens will pay the price for evils nurtured by a government that poses as their protector.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPT]**

## **Terrorism**

[7 Die, 700 Hurt As Bomb Rocks New York Towers - February 26, 1993](#)

[Congressional Record \[Page: H1159\] - WORLD TRADE CENTER BOMBING \(House of Representatives - March 10, 1993\)](#)

[How The FBI Gets Its Man](#)

[NOTE: The 60 Minutes Deception](#)

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To: **John Jamieson**

The same dang thing happened with Atta!

18 posted on **10/28/2001 12:38:22 PM PST** by [Howlin](#)

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To: **Uncle Bill**

You're making my brain hurt this afternoon, but thanks for taking the time to post this. Very damning.

19 posted on **10/28/2001 12:39:16 PM PST** by [Howlin](#)

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To: **Howlin**

*You're making my brain hurt this afternoon, but thanks for taking the time to post this.*

20 posted on **10/28/2001 1:50:02 PM PST** by [Capt. Tom](#)

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To: **Howlin**

Thanks. It just keeps going on and on and on and on. It's like a federal government corruption template. I mean, the FBI just now decides to check Atta's car and residence for the presence of the deadly bacterium. If it wasn't so serious, it would make me laugh.

[FBI \(Federal Bureau of Incompetence\) at it again](#)

## **FBI Testing Atta's Car, Residence, for Anthrax**

[NewsMax.com](#)

Sunday, Oct. 28, 2001 10:33 a.m. EST

In response to reports that the FBI had overlooked leads tying Twin Towers kamikaze hijacker Mohamed Atta to the recent wave of anthrax attacks on the U.S., the bureau now plans to test Atta's rental car and Florida residence for the presence of the deadly bacterium.

The decision to probe a possible Atta anthrax connection, first reported by Fox News Channel late Saturday, comes after a report last week that the FBI had specifically declined to sweep Atta's car and home for traces of the bioterror agent.

"In Florida, agents haven't tested cars or residences used by some of the hijackers, including those of Mohamed Atta," the Wall Street Journal revealed Thursday. "FBI officials said testing isn't a priority, because they assume that by now, the hijackers' cars and apartments would have been cleaned, removing any trace of anthrax."

"At this time, there are no plans to go back and check [Atta's car and apartment] for traces of anthrax," Special Agent Rene Salinas told the paper just four days ago.

The FBI has previously tested Atta's other personal effects, such as clothing he left behind, for anthrax traces.

Weeks before the Sept. 11 attacks, Atta and several of his fellow hijackers were spotted at Florida airfields inquiring about renting cropdusting airplanes, a move investigators suspect may have been linked to bioterrorism.

Atta was also reportedly spotted in a Florida pharmacy with reddened hands, a symptom some say could have been caused by anthrax contamination.

21 posted on **10/28/2001 3:09:54 PM PST** by [Uncle Bill](#)

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To: **Uncle Bill**

*The decision to probe a possible Atta anthrax connection, first reported by Fox News Channel late Saturday, comes after a report last week that the FBI had specifically declined to sweep Atta's car and home for traces of the bioterror agent.*

I had heard this "report" and found it as unbelievable as them blaming a US right wing "hate group".

I have had the feeling that they really didnt want to know the truth..

22 posted on **10/28/2001 3:21:41 PM PST** by [RnMomof7](#)

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To: **Uncle Bill**

The fatal error the US government made was prosecuting Ramzi Yousef as a mere criminal instead of looking into whether he was a state back terrorist. At this point, it doesn't appear the current administration wants Iraq to be involved, so this connection will continue to be dismissed as mere speculation.

Remember, Saddam isn't Satan until our government reissues it's fatah declaring him as the worst evil on the planet. Until such edict, please stay focused on the Taliban. (/sarcasim)

23 posted on **10/28/2001 3:36:02 PM PST** by [True Capitalist](#)

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To: **Uncle Bill; Howlin**

I'll echo Howlin's words re: the headache. (reminder to self to make an appt. to get some reading glasses)

24 posted on **10/28/2001 3:42:36 PM PST** by [NotJustAnotherPrettyFace](#)

[ [Post Reply](#) | [Private Reply](#) | [To 15](#) | [View Replies](#) | [Report Abuse](#) ]

To: **D Joyce**

Bttt! Thought you might be interested in this.

25 posted on **10/28/2001 3:56:27 PM PST** by [monkeywrench](#)

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*Comment #26 Removed by Moderator*

To: **NotJustAnotherPrettyFace**

*(reminder to self to make an appt. to get some reading glasses)*

Too late.....I just got new glasses. It's not our eyes; it's trying to cram all this information into our brains!

27 posted on **10/28/2001 7:44:34 PM PST** by [Howlin](#)

[ [Post Reply](#) | [Private Reply](#) | [To 24](#) | [View Replies](#) | [Report Abuse](#) ]

To: **Uncle Bill**

**FBI Website**

**FBI Most Wanted Terrorists Page With Pictures**

**Click Here To Report Suspicious Activity to the FBI**

**Call the FBI Toll Free at 1-866-483-5137**

**if you see or hear anything that threatens our national security.**

**America's Most Wanted website**

**The US State Department Rewards for Justice Program**

**was established by the 1984 Act to Combat International Terrorism, Public Law 98-533.**

**Under the Rewards Program, cooperating individuals and their immediate family members may be eligible for relocation to the United States or elsewhere, and they are assured complete confidentiality.**



**Rewards, totaling millions of dollars, have been paid in dozens of cases.  
Innocent lives have been saved and terrorists put behind bars.**

28 posted on **10/28/2001 7:50:37 PM PST** by [68-69TonkinGulfYachtClub](#)

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To: **OKCSubmariner**

I almost fell off my chair laughing at this one.

29 posted on **10/28/2001 11:10:08 PM PST** by [Uncle Bill](#)

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To: **OKCSubmariner**

**TIME TO COME CLEAN**

30 posted on **10/28/2001 11:17:13 PM PST** by [Uncle Bill](#)

[ [Post Reply](#) | [Private Reply](#) | [To 29](#) | [View Replies](#) | [Report Abuse](#) ]

To: **D Joyce**

I agree. I hate to see this site become a bigger govt./'at least it's not clinton' site. I also noticed that you seemed to be fighting alone on some threads. You aren't alone.

31 posted on **10/29/2001 9:30:33 AM PST** by [monkeywrench](#)

[ [Post Reply](#) | [Private Reply](#) | [To 26](#) | [View Replies](#) | [Report Abuse](#) ]

*Comment #32 Removed by Moderator*

To: **D Joyce**

I usually do. Click on my name and look. There are some of you here that don't need any help, though. ;>)

33 posted on **10/29/2001 10:17:55 AM PST** by [monkeywrench](#)

[ [Post Reply](#) | [Private Reply](#) | [To 32](#) | [View Replies](#) | [Report Abuse](#) ]

To: **OKCSubmariner**

**TEFLON TERRORISTS**

34 posted on **10/29/2001 11:53:22 AM PST** by [Uncle Bill](#)

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To: **ratcat**

*"In January 1995, Yousef and his associates plotted to blow up eleven U.S. commercial aircraft in one spectacular day of terrorist rage."*

35 posted on **12/26/2001 12:43:04 AM PST** by [Uncle Bill](#)

[ [Post Reply](#) | [Private Reply](#) | [To 10](#) | [View Replies](#) | [Report Abuse](#) ]

*Comment #36 Removed by Moderator*

To: **monkeyshine; ipaq2000; Lent; veronica; Sabramerician; beowolf; Nachum; BenF; angelo; ...**  
ping

37 posted on **09/09/2002 3:08:09 AM PDT** by [dennisw](#)

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To: **dennisw**

Cross-link:

**IRAQ- some links to terror**

38 posted on **09/09/2002 3:36:01 AM PDT** by [backhoe](#)

[ [Post Reply](#) | [Private Reply](#) | [To 37](#) | [View Replies](#) | [Report Abuse](#) ]

To: **dennisw**

bump

39 posted on **09/09/2002 10:32:24 AM PDT** by [Shermy](#)

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To: **dennisw**

Interesting. for one, shows, again, that the FBI is not interested much in the whole turth, but winning

percentage of court room victories.

**40** posted on **09/09/2002 10:33:55 AM PDT** by [Shermy](#)

[ [Post Reply](#) | [Private Reply](#) | [To 37](#) | [View Replies](#) | [Report Abuse](#) ]

To: **dennisw**

I've seen this before. Thanks for the reminder ping!

**41** posted on **09/09/2002 4:59:13 PM PDT** by [Excuse\\_My\\_Bellicosity](#)

[ [Post Reply](#) | [Private Reply](#) | [To 37](#) | [View Replies](#) | [Report Abuse](#) ]

To: **Uncle Bill**

bump

**42** posted on **09/10/2002 1:01:50 PM PDT** by [timestax](#)

[ [Post Reply](#) | [Private Reply](#) | [To 15](#) | [View Replies](#) | [Report Abuse](#) ]

To: **timestax**

bttt

**43** posted on **09/13/2002 5:04:59 PM PDT** by [timestax](#)

[ [Post Reply](#) | [Private Reply](#) | [To 42](#) | [View Replies](#) | [Report Abuse](#) ]

To: **Badabing Badaboom; pokerbuddy0**

#40 food for thought...

**44** posted on **11/25/2003 3:02:02 PM PST** by [Shermy](#)

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To: **Uncle Bill**

Bring this back to the top. Very important article. Mylroie is a great American.

**45** posted on **08/28/2005 9:58:25 PM PDT** by [doug from upland](#) (The Hillary documentary is coming -- INDICTING HILLARY)

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To: **doug from upland**

Thanks. Good post for later reading.

**46** posted on **08/28/2005 10:44:21 PM PDT** by [Musket](#)

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